

## **SYLLABUS FOR SOC101: PRINCIPLES OF SOCIOLOGY**

Course: SOC\*K101 Principles of Sociology

Course Schedule: MWF 11:00 a.m. – 11:50 a.m.

Location: D105

Instructor: Steven Neufeld

Office: C142

Phone: 860-383-5233

Email: sneufeld@trcc.commnet.edu

Office Hours: M and W 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m., and by appointment (always check with me first!)

### **I. Course Description**

Sociology is the study of groups, organizations, institutions, and societies, and their influences on human behavior. Sociology goes beyond individual and psychological explanations of human behavior to look at social factors and trends that shape individual behavior and the behavior of groups and societies. These social trends and factors include cultural aspects of societies, such as beliefs, values, and social norms. They also include structural aspects of societies, which refers to the positions and roles people occupy in groups, institutions, and societies as a whole. In particular, sociology focuses on patterns of social inequality, especially class, racial and ethnic, and gender inequalities in society—how they are created and maintained and how they affect our opportunities, beliefs and attitudes, and behavior in society. Overall, sociology allows us to analyze societies and social behavior from a critical perspective, thereby providing us with a better understanding of social problems and issues.

The course is divided into three parts, with an exam after each part. The first part of the course will examine how sociologists study the social world. This will discuss the idea of sociology as a science, the research methods used by sociologists to study the social world, and theoretical perspectives on society and social behavior. The second part of the course will explore the sociological concepts of culture and social structure. In terms of culture, we will look at issues such as culture and socialization, deviance, crime, and social control. In terms of social structure, we will examine concepts such as statuses and roles, groups and organizations, total institutions, and community. The final part of the course will study social inequality, including class inequality, racial and ethnic inequality, and gender inequality. Along the way, students will be introduced to a number of prominent classical theorists in the history of sociology, such as Marx, Durkheim, Weber, Parsons, Goffman, Merton, and Becker, as well as a variety of prominent theorists and researchers today.

### **II. Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes**

In this course, you will be expected to meet the following course objectives:

- Read and analyze primary sociological writings
- Demonstrate knowledge of the research process
- Demonstrate knowledge of major figures in the field of sociology
- Understand and apply major theoretical perspectives in sociology

- Demonstrate an understanding of how social factors and society as a whole influence individual and group values, attitudes, and beliefs
- Develop an understanding of cultural differences within American society and around the globe
- Develop an understanding of social inequality in American society

Learning outcomes refer to knowledge, skills, and abilities you should develop from this course. The learning outcomes for the course are:

- 1) **Critical Thinking:** To analyze and evaluate argumentation and persuasion in order to improve, refine, and refute it.
- 2) **Global Awareness:** To examine the effect of historical and contemporary national and international events and trends on social, political and cultural institutions.
- 3) **Scientific Inquiry:** To understand and utilize social scientific research methods for analyzing the social world
- 4) **Communication:** To understand and convey ideas using reading, writing, speaking, and listening
- 5) **Information Literacy:** To assess what information is needed to answer questions and solve problems and to retrieve, evaluate, and use that information effectively.
- 6) **Responsible Citizenship:** To understand how individual attitudes and behaviors affect societies and to use that understanding for ethical decisions and actions in personal, professional, and social life.

### **III. Course Readings**

The required book for the class is:

- Susan J. Ferguson, *Mapping the Social Landscape: Reading in Sociology, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition*. McGraw Hill, 2013.

This book is an edited volume of readings, rather than a traditional textbook. While there is no required traditional text book, you may find it useful to consult a textbook as an additional source of information. One textbook that I have used in the past and found useful is Lisa J. McIntyre, *The Practical Skeptic: Core Concepts in Sociology, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition*, McGraw Hill, 2008. Copies of it are available on reserve in the TRCC library. You may also purchase a copy of this or any other textbook on-line if you wish.

Some of the required weekly readings are available on-line as listed in the Course Schedule in Section VI. If you are unable to access the website by clicking on the link in the syllabus, you should copy and paste the website address into your browser. Assigned weekly readings should be done by the beginning of the week.

#### IV. Course Assignments and Evaluation

Your course grade will be based on two assignments, a final project consisting of either a traditional research paper or a service learning project, and three take-home exams:

- The two assignments will each count for 10% of the final grade.
- The final project will count for 20% of the final grade.
- The first exam will count for 15% of the final grade, the second exam will count for 20% of the final grade, and the third exam will count for 25% of the final grade. The third exam will be your final exam, although it will not be a cumulative exam.
- **Class participation will help boost your final GPA for the course.**

All assignments and exams involve written work, and the quality of your writing, including spelling and grammar and proper paragraph construction, will be a factor in your overall grade. At a minimum, you should spell check all work before it is submitted. **If your writing skills are not strong, I strongly encourage you to visit The Writing Center in room C117 for assistance to avoid deductions in your grade.** I am also willing to review early drafts of papers and assignments provided you send them to me several days in advance of the due date.

Late work will be penalized up to a full letter grade deduction depending on the severity of the infraction. Exams cannot be submitted after I have returned the graded exams, which is usually one week after the exams are due, without explicit permission from me. **Failure to complete assignments and/or exams will hurt your final grade more than submitted work that receives an F but reflects some level of effort.**

If you have a disability that may affect your progress in this course, please meet with a Disability Service Provider (DSP) as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations cannot be provided until you provide written authorization from a DSP.

<b>TRCC Disabilities Service Providers</b> Counseling & Advising Office Room A-119	
<b>Matt Liscum</b> (860) 383-5240	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Physical Disabilities</li><li>• Sensory Disabilities</li><li>• Medical Disabilities</li><li>• Mental Health Disabilities</li></ul>
<b>Chris Scarborough</b> (860) 892-5751	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Learning Disabilities</li><li>• ADD/ADHD</li><li>• Autism Spectrum</li></ul>

--	--

Students are expected to follow to standards of academic honesty. If there is a question about cheating or plagiarism, the college's **Academic Integrity Policy** (revised 8 January 2003) will be followed.

## V. Cell Phone Policy

Students are notified that cellular phones and beepers are allowed in class or in the Learning Resource Center only if they are turned off or turned to a silent mode. Under no circumstances are phones to be answered in class. When there are extenuating circumstances that require that a student be available by phone or beeper, the student should speak to the instructor prior to class, so that together they can arrive at an agreement.

## VI. Course Schedule

The following schedule is a tentative list of the lecture topics that are intended to be covered each week as well as the required readings for the week. Since the schedule is tentative, the dates for specific topics and readings may be revised during the course. Changes to the schedule will be announced in class.

### **Part I: Sociology As Social Science**

Week 1: Introduction

Fri 1/24: Introduction

Readings: None

Week 2: Sociological Theory

Mon 1/27: The Sociological Imagination

Wed 1/29: Sociology as Social Science

Fri 1/31: Deductive and Inductive Theory

Readings: Ferguson readings 1, 2, and 3

- Ferguson reading 7
- "Operationalization", Wikipedia entry at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operationalization>
- "Emile Durkheim", Wikipedia entry, at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%89mile\\_Durkheim](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%89mile_Durkheim)
- "Emile Durkheim on Suicide" at <http://www2.uvawise.edu/pww8y/Soc/-Theorists/Durkheim/Suicide.html>

Week 3: Research Methods

Mon, 2/3: Durkheim's Theory of Suicide

Wed, 2/5: Quantitative Research Methods

Fri, 2/7: Qualitative Research Methods

Readings:

- Ferguson reading 8
- Grimes, “If You Want to Observe ‘Em, Join ‘Em”, *The New York Times*, June 16, 2008, at [http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/16/books/16grimes.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/16/books/16grimes.html?_r=0)

Week 4: Theoretical Perspectives

Mon, 2/10: Experimental Research

Wed, 2/12: The Functionalist Perspective

Fri, 2/14: The Conflict Perspective

Readings: Ferguson readings 4 and 5

Assignment #1 Handed Out 2/14; Due 2/21

Week 5: Theoretical Perspectives

Mon, 2/17: President’s Day Holiday—No Class

Wed, 2/19: The Conflict Perspective (cont’d)

Fri, 2/21: The Symbolic Interactionist Perspective

Readings: Ferguson readings 19, 38, and 40

Exam #1 Handed Out 2/21; Due 2/28

## **Part II: Culture and Social Structure**

Week 6: Culture

Mon, 2/24: *Happy*

Wed, 2/26: *Happy* (cont’d)

Fri, 2/28: Social Norms

Readings: Ferguson readings 10, 11, and 12

Assignment #2 Handed Out 2/28; Due 3/14

Week 7: Socialization

Mon, 3/3: Subcultures and Countercultures

Wed, 3/5: Subcultures and Countercultures

Fri, 3/7: Socialization

Readings: Ferguson readings 13, 14, and 16

Week 8: Deviant Behavior and Social Control

Mon, 3/10: Theories of Deviance Part I

Wed, 3/12: Theories of Deviance Part II

Fri, 3/14: Social Control

Readings: Ferguson readings 6, 20, 21, and 22

Week 9: Spring Break

Week 10: Social Structure

Mon, 3/24: Roles and Statuses

Wed, 3/26: Groups

Fri, 3/28: Organizations

Readings: Ferguson readings 17 and 18

Final Project Handed Out 3/28; Due 5/2

Week 11: Community

Mon, 3/31: Community

Wed, 4/2: The Decline of Community

Fri, 4/4: Social Change

Readings:

- Ferguson reading 56
- Robert D. Putnam, "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital", *Journal of Democracy* 6:1, Jan 1995, 65-78, at <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/DETOC/assoc/bowling.html>
- Joseph Stromberg, "Eric Klinenberg on Going Solo", Smithsonian.com, at <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/Eric-Klinenberg-on-Going-Solo.html?c=y&page=1>

Exam #2 Handed Out 4/4; Due 4/11

### **Part III: Social Inequality**

Week 12: Social Inequality

Mon, 4/7: Film

Wed, 4/9: Post-Industrialism

Fri, 4/11: Social Inequality

Readings: Ferguson readings 23, 41, and 43

Week 13: Social Stratification

Mon, 4/14: Functionalist vs. Conflict Theories

Wed, 4/16: Caste vs. Class Systems

Fri, 4/18: Social Class

Readings: Ferguson readings 24, 26, and 55

Week 14: Education and Social Inequality

Mon, 4/21: The Functionalist Theory of Education

Wed, 4/23: The Conflict Theory of Education  
Fri, 4/25: Education and Social Inequality

Readings: Ferguson readings 50, 51, and 52

Week 15: Racial and Ethnic Inequality

Mon, 4/28: Film

Wed, 4/30: The Social Construction of Race and Ethnicity

Fri, 5/2: Prejudice and Discrimination

Readings: Ferguson readings 25, 31, 32, 33, and 34

Week 16: Gender Inequality

Mon, 5/5: Sex vs. Gender

Wed, 5/7: Sex Inequality

Fri, 5/9: Conclusion

Readings: Ferguson readings 9, 27, 28, 29, and 42

Final Exam Handed Out 5/9; Due 5/16